THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir, oil discoveries have been made in block RJ-ON-90/1 by M/s Cairn Energy Pty. Ltd. in the State of Rajasthan. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC), Oil India Ltd. (OIL) and private/ joint venture companies are at present carrying out hydrocarbon exploration in the State of Rajasthan.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Question does not arise.

Rise in natural gas price

1283. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have raised the natural gas price by 12 per cent for fertilizers and 26 per cent for power units;

(b) if so, the details about the price; and

(c) whether it has an impact upon the small and marginal farmers?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Non-revision of petroleum prices

†1284. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the companies working under the private sector have to suffer losses as a result of not increasing the prices of petrol and diesel suitably;

(b) if so, the details thereof, company-wise;

(c) whether the petroleum companies have been permitted to increase the prices of petrol and diesel every fortnightly in the domestic market upto 10 per cent; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) if so, the reasons for not increasing the prices thereof in view of circumstances prevailing in the world market?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The private sector oil marketing companies are free to fix their prices of petrol and diesel.

(c) and (d) Although the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) have raised the domestic consumer prices of petrol and diesel from time to time, taking into account the increase in international prices, other factors, including concern for relative domestic stability in the face of international volatility, have contributed to determining pricing policy. The steps taken by the Government to modulate the impact of volatility in the international prices on domestic consumer prices of petrol and deisel include *inter-alia* approving a price band mechanism as per which OMCs can effect price revisions based on the previous fortnight's average international price, provided that the exchange rate adjusted C&F (cost & freight) product price was within the band of+10% around the mean of (a) last three months' rolling average prices; and (b) last one year's rolling average prices. In case the C&F prices breach the ceiling due to high volatility, OMCs would keep the prices in the band and approach the Government.

Government is constantly monitoring and keeping under careful review the prices of sensitive petroleum products.

New mobile laboratories in Andhra Pradesh

1285. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would increase the number of mobile laboratories to check adulteration of petroleum products at the rate of one for each district in Andhra Pradesh and two for Hyderabad city, as there are only two mobile laboratories available with oil companies to cover the entire State of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?